

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: November 12, 2015

Agenda Item: Hansen Fee Title Addition to Fresno Tailwater Wildlife Management Area

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Endorsement

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 minutes

Background

FWP proposes to purchase up to 47 acres of property adjacent to the Fresno Tailwater Wildlife Management Area, located along the Milk River, roughly 13 miles northwest of Havre. FWP first negotiated the layout of this purchase with the landowner in early March of this year. The primary benefit of this acquisition is maintaining public access to the WMA for public recreation and Department management (see maps). The route currently used by the public to access the WMA crosses this parcel, which is sandwiched between U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and WMA lands.

In addition to the critical access this parcel would provide, it also supports native grasslands that complement habitat values on the WMA, supporting waterfowl, pheasants, white-tailed deer, mule deer and a variety of songbirds, amphibians, mammals, and other nongame wildlife species. The parcel would also expand hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities. Fresno Tailwater WMA is part of a complex of recreation lands including Fresno Tailwater Fishing Access Site and Fresno Dam Recreation Area.

Public Involvement Process & Results

FWP has not sought any public comment at this time. Upon endorsement from the Commission, FWP would conduct appropriate analysis and public review processes to determine project feasibility.

Alternatives and Analysis

Under the no action alternative, FWP would decline the opportunity to acquire this property and public road access to Fresno Tailwater WMA may eventually be in jeopardy. Native habitats associated with this parcel would also be managed for purposes other than wildlife habitat.

Under the proposed action, proceeding with this purchase would ensure continued accessibility to Fresno Tailwater WMA, along with limited expanded habitat conservation.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP recommends endorsement by the Fish and Wildlife Commission, thus allowing the Department to proceed with further analysis and assessment of the feasibility of this project.

Proposed Motion

I move the Commission endorse this addition to the Fresno Tailwater WMA, allowing FWP to conduct further analysis and associated public review.